



STINGER SPORTS

PRESS RELEASE

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CONCORDIA FOOTBALL POST MORTEM

The year that was supposed to belong to the Concordia University Stingers came to an unceremonious end on Saturday afternoon October 29th at the Concordia Stadium, when the Stingers bowed 22-21 to the McGill Redmen. It was a disappointing end to an up-and-down season, which saw the highly regarded Stingers never really getting untracked.

Concordia broke training camp in early September and started the season as if the team was going to be invincible. The Stingers scored 49 points before any of the opposition could reply, starting with a mechanical 21-0 whitewashing of York in a pre-season encounter. Concordia followed up with a 28 point first quarter in the league home-opener against Ottawa, before the oppressive heat of the day tamed the offense to settle for a 31-10 win. The pre-season media ravings continued to gain momentum, but the reality of having to win games on the field hit home on September 16th, when the Stingers were outclassed 31-8 by the supposedly underdog McGill Redmen.

It took a week of practice and 29 minutes of football before the dazed Stingers recovered from the McGill letdown. By that time, they trailed the Queen's Golden Gaels 24-0 in Kingston, before a last minute field goal cut into the half-time deficit. For the next 30 minutes though, Concordia owned the ball, scoring three majors to three points for the Gaels, losing 27-24 when a 3rd down gamble from the Queen's 11 failed on the game's final play.

The momentum of the near miss at Queen's carried over to the return encounter with McGill the following Saturday, at the Athletic Complex.

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Playing perhaps their best complete game of the season, the Stingers handed the Redmen a decisive 31-14 defeat. Two spectacular "Colin Anderson to Bernie Richardson" touchdown passes highlighted the win, but the consistent play, lacking since the pre-season York game had returned.

The Bishop's Gaiters and superstar running back Chris Skinner were next up at the stadium and in the mud and rain, Concordia literally swamped the Gaiters 31-8 after trailing 8-0 early on a Skinner 41 yard run. The Stinger defense came through with a fine performance under extremely adverse conditions, completely closing down Skinner and the potent Bishop's scoring attack.

The Stingers ended regular season play with two games on the road. At Carleton, Concordia overcame the Ravens and the wind to win 40-16, in a game that saw the Stingers lead 23-1 after 30 minutes, only to get side-tracked in the second half and have Carleton rally to within 8 points mid-way in the 4th quarter. It took a goal-line stand by the defense that turned back a Carleton 1st down at the 3 situation, and a 17 point splurge by the offense in the final 3 minutes, to give the Stingers the win.

A week later in Lennoxville, the Jekyll and Hyde Stingers changed places on almost every series in a coaches nightmare 39-39 tie. The wild affair saw the Stinger defense pick off six interceptions, yet allow 32 points (1 Bishop's T.D. came on a punt return). The Stingers and Gaiters scored from everywhere, running back two punts and two pass interceptions for majors. Yet it was penalties that did Concordia in, in the final analysis. The Stingers were called 16 times to 4 for the Gaiters, the final flag nullifying a first down at the Gaiters 5 yard line, with 30 seconds to play. The big blow however, was the loss of rushing leader Albert Calaguiro, who went down with a shoulder separation.

The tie with Bishop's was enough to secure second place and home field advantage in the O.Q.I.F.C. semi-final against McGill. The Redmen were coming off a last minute 34-33 win at Queen's in the season finale at Kingston and with a strong wind at their backs jumped ahead 9-3 after 15 minutes. In the second quarter the Stingers seemed to take control, leading 14-9 until a controversial pass interference call at their 1 yard line gave the Redmen a major score and a 16-14 half-time lead.

The Stingers took the wind to open the second half but failed to score until the opening minute of the final quarter taking a 21-16 lead. Then McGill's Richie Klimas booted 2 field goals to give McGill the one point advantage, and though the Stingers came close, a pass interception in the final minute killed any chance of a rally and ended the Concordia Football season.

The loss of fullback Albert Calaguero was the key blow to the Stingers in the semi-final. All season long the coaching staff coped with numerous injuries, as they utilized the team's depth. But Calaguero had been the clubs "bread and butter" runner, racking up over 350 yards in the last two full games he had played. And worse than his loss was the timing. One week before the playoff just didn't give the offense time to adjust.

In retrospect the season was a disappointment because the expectations were so high. In 1982 Stinger fans were celebrating a "tremendous" 5-2 season. This year 4-2-1 was disappointing.

The fact that so much was expected shows just how far the Concordia football program has come in a short time. The Stingers, players and coaches, might feel let down after losing to McGill, but they should be proud of what they have accomplished in creating a quality football program at Concordia. The year that might have been is history, but the future of Concordia football never looked better.

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